

### AWKWARD STATEMENT OF A FAMOUS DOCTRINE

B. C. MOOMAW

How easily a doctrine can be weakened and destroyed by the ignorance and awkwardness of its defenders. For example the main point urged by Calvinists in defense of the doctrine of eternal punishment, which they admit has no analogy among men, is that "the divine authority which is violated is infinite." Now this argument would have a logical basis if that infinitude was infinite hate and infinite savagery, but the fact that it is infinite love totally overthrows the Calvinistic position. The only basis upon which the doctrine of eternal punishment can rest is the incurable nature of sin. If sin on general principles or in individual cases is externally incurable, and if conscious existence in a state of incurable sin is external, then and then only is punishment eternal. It is impossible that God should ever cease to desire the recovery of a sinner. We are far less perfect in love than God, yet it is impossible, unless we should become fiends and savages, for us to cease to desire the happiness of our children, or of any one for that matter. Now how far this desire upon God's part and upon the part of all holy and happy creatures for the recovery of the sinner, a desire which must of course persevere to all eternity, and which being sincere must bring to bear all saving and regenerating influences, will be potential to the salvation of the most hardened and most obstinate, is a question which we do not pretend to solve. We only present the point as the only possible logical hinge upon which to hang the doctrine of eternal punishment. The Calvinistic statement of this doctrine is merely an awkward slander upon the character of God, which would be grotesque if it did not so nearly approach the borders of blasphemy. The dogmatic argument in support of the doctrine presents another and a very interesting aspect of the subject. It is based upon declarations of Scripture, and must be determined by just principles of interpretation. But no rational theologian any longer believes that God's decrees are blindly arbitrary, that the act of his will is unreasoning, that it is not formed upon the eternal principles of equity. The fossil school of theology may cling to the arbitrary decrees, but for the most part thinkers along this line have emerged into the light of reason. If God has decreed the eternal punishment of the wicked, it is because sin, in a multitude of individual cases, is eternally incurable and by a necessary law these sinners are eternally existent in a state of incurable sin. If the decree doesn't rest upon this ground it has no rational foundation at all, or what is more likely it isn't a decree at all.

Of course the Christain takes no chances. His wisdom consists in getting on the safe side of the doubt; while on the other hand the folly of the sinner consists in staying on the perilous side of the doubt, for how does he know but that there might be some loophole in his logic which will at last let him into hell.

### BLESSEDNESS

J. F. KOONTZ

Blessedness is a term which is sometimes synonymous with happiness in the Bible. It is possible to be happy, or at least seem so, and not be blessed. Mirth, glee or hilarity is only an excitement of the animal spirits.

The bee as it is busily engaged from morn till night—filling even its sphere is happy but not blessed. The bird as it flies from tree to tree warbling its sweet songs filling its sphere is happy but not blessed.

Blessedness is heavenly felicity, saintliness. It is God's happiness, a happiness beyond happiness, a happiness too extensive for the human mind to fully grasp. It has a height but no top; a depth but no bottom; an east and a west, a north and south but no dimensions; a center but no circumference; like a line without an end or an ocean without a shore; as endless as the ring on the prodigal son's finger.

It was a favorite term used by different Bible heroes. David introduces the Psalms with it and uses it frequently. "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; blessed is the people that know the joyful sound for they, O Lord, shall walk in the light of thy countenance." Christ uses it nine times in introducing his sermon on the Mount. John, Rev. 14:13, says, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.

It is possessed by the child of God and may and does exist under the most painful circumstances.

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake."

"Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

Martyrs seem to be the most blessed of our race. We find in Revelation the question, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence come they?" Answer: These are they which have come out of great tribulation and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

I rejoice to know that it is offered us and within our reach so that we can possess it. It is said that possession is nine points in the law. Then let us possess it.

### PRAYER COVERING, WHEREFORE

J. W. BEER

No. 44 is here. On page 6 is found a question and a request for "Brethren Beer and Bailey." As we are a long distance apart and can not readily confer with each other we must do the best we can under the disadvantageous circumstances

B should not wait for Brother B,  
Nor should our brother wait for me.  
In showing truth, for all to see,  
In hope that we may well agree.

Brother Lehman gives the reading as in the Diaglott of I Cor. 11:13-16. I once had a Diaglott but it went up in the flames with the rest of our highly prized library when our house with all that was in it was consumed by fire. I often referred to the Diaglott and regarded it as quite a help, but in several instances I found it as in the case before us. The brother, after quoting as it reads says, "Make plain 'because her hair has been given to her instead of a veil'"

To make this plain, I will say at once and emphatically, *this is a mistranslation and misrepresentation.*

But possibly the statement alone will not be satisfactory, and hence I will add a few facts which I know to be facts.

1. The accepted version reads: "for her hair is given her for a covering."

2. In the revised version "being the version set forth A. D. 1611, compared with the most ancient authorities, and revised A. D. 1881," it reads as before: "for her hair is given her for a covering." These revisers found no reason or authority to make any change, and therefore they stand as witnesses to its correctness.

3. I think it well to notice the German rendering. When I preached in German I also studied in the German, and compared it with the English and the original Greek. The German expresses exactly the same idea that is found in the authorized and revised versions, and reads thus: "*Das Harr ist ihr zur Decke gegeben. Decke is covering.*"

4. But, coming to the original Greek, I am sorry to inform you that my Greek version and other works went with the Diaglott; but I am happy to say that some is left beyond the reach of flames. The Greek term translated covering is *peribolaion* and means, "something cast around."

With these facts before me I can not say that the hair is not given for a covering. I hold that it is a *peribolaion* cast about a woman's head for protection and glory; and this natural covering of her natural head symbolizes the *peribolaion*—the protecting mercy and grace of God—thrown around man as the head of woman in nature, for his protection and guidance that he may take care of and provide for woman as for himself.

All the foregoing has special reference